United Nations A/C.3/60/SR.13

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
3 November 2005

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)
later: Mr. Anshor (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Indonesia)
later: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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05-55067 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women *(continued)* (A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, 111, 137 and Corr.1, 165, 206, 211, 274, 281, 371 and 372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" *(continued)* (A/60/111, 170, 231 and 371)

1. **Mr. Labbé** (Chile) said that regional cooperation had been central to the implementation of Chile's gender-related policies and commitments. His delegation fully supported the work of the United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and stressed the need to ensure that the great variety of initiatives entrusted to those agencies received adequate funds. It was also essential to support the wide-ranging work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In that connection, his delegation supported the recommendation to extend the Committee's meetings so that progress could be made more quickly in achieving its complex objectives.

2. Women in Chile now made up over one third of the working population, and had access to decent employment, in line with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The entry of women into the workforce had been one of the main reasons for poverty reduction in the country.

3. Primary, secondary and higher education had become a fundamental basis for the integration of women into the global market. A primary concern must therefore be to expand and improve education, with a clear perspective on equal opportunities for men and women. Continuous training for women should also be encouraged in order to improve the adaptability of companies to the modern economy.

4. It was very important for the international community to participate in the preparatory work being undertaken on all forms of violence against women and his delegation supported the idea of examining the issue of violence against women at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. His Government had undertaken a series of initiatives to protect women against violence within the family and had recently eliminated loopholes in the law to that end. In that connection, the new Filiation Act put an end to laws which gave fewer rights to children born outside of wedlock, family courts had been established to examine all cases related to family conflicts and a new law had been promulgated on civil marriage. There had also been progress on legislation to help the victims of sexual violence.

5. Satisfactory levels had been reached in the area of maternal and infant health. Chile was implementing in-depth reforms which would allow women improved treatment against cervical cancer, breast cancer and HIV/AIDS treatment. Women in Chile also had increasing opportunities in the area of decision-making and political participation and representation. The Government had also made it a priority for women to have access to high-level positions.

6. **Ms. Sauerbrey** (United States of America) said that the United States aimed to improve the lives of women worldwide by implementing programmes that led to tangible results. The need for accelerated government responses to human trafficking had led the United States Congress to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. The Act assisted victims in the United States and abroad, enhanced federal criminal laws against traffickers, increased measures to prevent persons from being trafficked and mandated the Department of State to report annually on government actions to combat human trafficking. An act of 2003 strengthened the ability of national law to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violent crimes against children, and provided severe penalties for Americans who travelled abroad to prey on sexually exploited and trafficked children.

7. At its latest session, the Commission on the Status of Women had adopted a United States-sponsored resolution to eliminate demand for trafficked women and girls, which was the first United Nations resolution focusing on how human trafficking was fuelled by demand. Moreover, the United States Senate had recently given its consent to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. She urged other countries to ratify the Convention in order to end modern-day slavery.

8. The Government had launched a new initiative to support women's justice and empowerment in Benin, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia. The three-year programme would help those countries to strengthen the capacities of their legal systems to protect women and punish violators by training police, prosecutors and judges to handle cases of sexual violence and abuse against women. It also aimed to increase awareness of the need for women's justice and empowerment through high-level engagement, conferences, public awareness and education.

9. The United States was committed to providing health care for women in developing countries. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief supported HIV/AIDS programmes in 123 countries worldwide, focusing on 15 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and South-East Asia that represented over half the world's cases of infection. Through the Plan, which contained an entire section on gender concerns, the United States had pledged over $2 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Plan integrated the significant work already accomplished under the President's international mother-to-child HIV prevention initiative. The United States was also addressing the loss of life in childbirth. To that end, it had held a panel on maternal mortality during the previous session of the General Assembly.

10. Most of the refugees, returnees and displaced persons assisted through United States contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations were women and children. Her Government strove to ensure that female refugees participated equitably in all areas of decision-making, food distribution and other humanitarian services, and that they were protected from rape and abuse. The United States provided life-sustaining services as well as assistance with income-generation projects for women, maternal and child health care, literacy training, and programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

11. Her Government placed emphasis on advancing women's economic status, including their property and inheritance rights. At the latest session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United States had introduced a draft resolution on the economic advancement of women, calling on Member States to undertake legislative, administrative and financial measures to create a strong enabling environment for all women entrepreneurs and workers.

12. A United States-sponsored resolution on women and political participation (General Assembly resolution 58/142) had suggested practical measures for Governments and civil society to facilitate women's political participation and empowerment. The United States had also organized a panel discussion in the Commission on the Status of Women on efforts to implement the resolution.

13. With regard to women in post-conflict situations, the United States-Afghan Women's Council promoted private-public partnerships between the institutions of both countries. The Council would shortly meet to discuss new programmes to support women's political participation, legal reforms, education, health care and economic empowerment. Furthermore, the Department of State's Iraqi-women's democracy initiative funded training programmes on political organization, leadership, entrepreneurial skills and media outreach. That initiative and the United States-Iraqi Women's Network had contributed to the large voter turnout, including many women voters, in Iraq's January 2005 democratic elections.

14. Her delegation hoped that the activities outlined might serve as examples of good practices for other nations engaged in similar efforts.

15. **Mr. Hemayetuddin** (Bangladesh) said that the advancement of women was a key component of his country's major policy thrusts. The Constitution guaranteed equal rights for men and women and allowed for the adoption of special measures in favour of women and children.

16. Bangladesh remained fully committed to implementing the objectives of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Immediately following the Beijing Conference, a national plan of action had been drawn up in line with the Declaration. A separate ministry had also been established solely devoted to the advancement of women.

17. No development goal could be achieved without mainstreaming gender and empowering women. To that end, gender dimensions had been reflected in his country's poverty-reduction strategy. Bangladesh also had a gender-sensitive budget, with the largest percentage allocated to education, particularly female education, which was free up to the twelfth grade. The World Bank had referred to Bangladesh as the pioneer in South Asia for narrowing gender disparities at the primary and secondary levels. His country had also

substantially reduced child mortality and improved maternal health.

18. Innovative ideas such as microcredit and informal education had been coupled with active governmental support to empower women in Bangladesh. Women were sufficiently empowered to act as major catalysts for development. Economic empowerment had also led women towards political empowerment: the country had over 13, 000 elected female representatives in local government.

19. Finally, he stressed that common objectives related to the advancement of women could only be achieved through partnerships across the broadest possible spectrum and provided that the relevant commitments and resolutions were fully implemented.

20. **Ms. Al-Jouiki** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Millennium Development Goals would be unattainable as long as the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action remained unrealized. Gains in education, health and human rights of women had not been matched in the political and economic areas, especially in the developing countries. Greater international political will and more funding were needed to fight poverty, disease, the negative effects of globalization, war, and occupation, all of which discriminated against women both as women per se, and because women were in too weak a position to fight the many obstacles themselves.

21. Violence against women was a global problem that transcended the boundaries of nation, region, society, and class. Ending violence and discrimination against women required an environment that honoured religious, cultural and social diversity. Today's educated girl was tomorrow's knowledgeable woman, empowered to assert her equality with men. Her delegation could not overemphasize its concern for poverty and disease among women in sub-Saharan Africa. It also reminded the international community of the suffering caused among Palestinian women and girls who were deprived of water, food and medicine as a result of the Israeli occupation. Widespread trafficking in women and girls continued to be a stain on society, and needed to be stopped by pursuing the perpetrators, concluding bilateral and regional agreements and ratifying existing conventions.

22. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya renewed its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which it had incorporated into its national policy. It had been among the first countries to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and in 2004 had acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention and also to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Libyan Penal Code had criminalized trafficking in or sale of women, and other legislative measures had been taken against traditional practices that discriminated against women. Women in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya were working, where condition, permitted, on an equal footing with men in professions that had previously been the preserve of men.

23. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda), referring to the Millennium Development Goal concerning the empowerment of women, said that empowerment meant enabling people to control their future and influence decisions about development strategies. The Government of Uganda had set up machinery to that end, as well as taking measures at district level to promote equality of treatment for women in all areas of life. It was thus seeking to give women access to productive resources and improved access to labour markets, create a sustainable enabling environment for the use of information and communication technology, help them to become small-scale entrepreneurs and bridge the gender digital divide, particularly in rural areas. The Government was also funding programmes to reduce illiteracy among women, while civil society was also involved in the efforts to provide women with skills training.

24. As an agro-based economy, Uganda was especially concerned to mobilize and organize rural women for agricultural production, fish farming and record-keeping. Other action to alleviate poverty among women included the establishment of microcredit institutions and self-help schemes.

25. Discrimination on the basis of sex had been outlawed in Uganda, whose Constitution stipulated the right of all persons to equal pay for equal work. In addition, the Government was developing an equal-opportunity policy to ensure that women participated in and benefited from development initiatives on an equal footing with men.

26. The challenges remaining were the preponderance of men on the "information highway",

insufficient resources for the necessary programmes and measures for the empowerment of women; microlevel constraints to increased control by women of productive resources and returns from cash crops, due to unequal gender relations at all levels; the continuing ravages of HIV/AIDS; lack of childcare policies for working mothers; and absence of social-security coverage for women in the informal sector.

27. **Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas) said that, while the international community had consistently reaffirmed the indispensable role of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving development goals, the necessary political will still needed to be mobilized. The Bahamas trusted that the outcomes of the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2005 World Summit would provide fresh impetus to that end.

28. The Bahamas, for its part, had a strong record of political participation by women, with a consistently higher electoral turnout on the part of women than of men. Women there were also gaining increased access to decision-making, with rising proportions in elective office and an overwhelming majority in the highest positions in government agencies. She said that her country would not rest on its laurels but would continue to seek not only to meet but indeed surpass the quotas recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action.

29. The Bahamas remained committed to providing primary and secondary education for all its citizens and to protecting the health of its entire population, including women and girls, in particular against HIV/AIDS. Noteworthy in that respect were its awareness-raising campaign and its prevention, care and treatment programmes, offering free antiretroviral therapy for pregnant HIV-positive women. It also ensured universal access to reproductive health services, free of charge.

30. Moreover, the Government continued to review the Bahamian Constitution and legislation with a view to amendment as necessary. It would thereby seek to remove the final barrier to equality of participation and treatment for women in all areas of life, particularly the economic sphere, where their empowerment was perhaps the most important factor in their advancement.

31. She referred in conclusion to the need to protect women from violence, failing which all other advances were meaningless. The Government had taken steps to address that issue, on which it was also working closely with civil society.

32. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said her country had recently acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It had also set up a commission for gender equality and initiated action for the promotion of equal opportunity.

33. Women in San Marino had long had the right to vote and enjoyed equality of access to education, allowing them increasingly to participate in the country's decision-making. Furthermore, specific legal measures had been introduced to facilitate the integration of women into the world of work, including maternity support for working women, tax reductions for companies hiring women in particular sectors, and support for young women entrepreneurs. As a result and thanks to a favourable economic situation, significant numbers of women in San Marino had reached high positions in the private sector, public administration, the legal field, international relations and the media. She noted, however, that it had been more difficult to achieve comparable results in the political sphere, notwithstanding several women heads of State. In order to promote greater participation by women in all sectors of public life, a number of women's non-governmental organizations had been founded with the encouragement of the Government, which remained committed to pursuing its efforts to ensure full and comprehensive equality for the girls and women of San Marino.

34. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon) referred to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as being, along with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the main benchmarks for the efforts of Governments and the international community to further the advancement of women. While welcoming the reaffirmation of all the relevant internationally agreed goals and recognizing that real advances had been made, he stressed that in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, little progress had been achieved. He referred in that connection to the need to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS among young women and combat violence against women, which he said had been rightly described as one of the most serious violations of women's basic rights. The empowerment of women was also essential, especially in rural areas of Africa, where they played

an incalculable role in ensuring their families' subsistence and preserving the environment.

35. In Cameroon special efforts were being made to improve the living conditions of women, particularly through action in education, health care and the economy, supported by bilateral and multilateral partners. At the legal level, measures were constantly being taken to improve the status of women, through the incorporation into national legislation of the relevant provisions of international instruments. In human resource development, policy guidelines had been issued for the universal schooling of girls, training in information and communication technology, support for rural women, encouragement of women entrepreneurs and the organization of women's associations. In addition, women's participation in decision-making was growing and would continue to do so, with increased representation in Government, parliament, the State administration and universities, as well as in the higher ranks of the police force and the army.

36. As for violence against women, both legal and political measures had been taken to combat it in Cameroon, particularly through the new Penal Code, which punished it severely in all its forms. Awareness-raising campaigns were often organized in that connection, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund and in collaboration with women's grass-roots organizations, directed at all sectors of the population.

37. He concluded by calling for the support of the international community to meet the challenges still facing Cameroon in its efforts to improve the lot of women, particularly poverty, HIV/AIDS and the lack of specialists in gender issues.

38. **Ms. Singh** (Nepal) said that the Nepalese Government, subscribing to the view expressed at the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly that progress for women was progress for all, believed that women played a vital role in achieving sustainable development at all levels, and that international cooperation should be further strengthened to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination.

39. Issues of particular importance to Nepal with regard to women included poverty, illiteracy, lack of access to economic resources, maternal health, trafficking for commercial and sexual exploitation, gender discrimination and violence, as well as lack of education and ignorance of women's rights. Women and girls in rural areas were also the most vulnerable victims of terrorism, which had obstructed development in recent years. The Government was nevertheless pressing on with its current five-year development plan, which sought to address all the challenges she had just mentioned. Development programmes for women were also being implemented, in partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations.

40. In Nepal, women enjoyed equal rights under the Constitution, while their human rights had been improved through legislative measures over the years. They were able to participate more fully in decision-making through being allocated seats in local-government bodies and the national parliament. Moreover, it was hoped that elections to the House of Representatives, to be held in April 2007, would further increase the participation of women in the country's decision-making bodies.

41. Noting finally that Nepal was a party to several international human-rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, she called on the United Nations system to increase its technical assistance to Member States for their implementation.

42. *Mr. Anshor (Indonesia, Vice-Chairman), took the Chair.*

43. **Ms. Tawfiq** (Iraq) said that Iraqi women had borne more than their share of the recent troubles in Iraq and had faced them heroically, particularly in the political sphere. A quarter of candidates on most electoral lists in the recent elections had been women, nearly two thirds of eligible women had voted, nearly a third of National Assembly members were female, and six ministerial portfolios were held by women. Women had broken through into leadership positions in foreign missions and the police corps, and were active in civil society and political parties. Dozens of women's organizations and professional associations had been founded, which, in cooperation with women's organizations around the world, had acted as a platform for defence of women's rights.

44. The draft Iraqi constitution contained many passages guaranteeing women's rights with respect to citizenship, participation in public life, social protection, health care, and housing. The state of

women's rights reflected the state of society as a whole, and Iraq was in the process of revising its legislation to keep pace with social change. Iraq asked States and non-governmental women's rights organizations around the world to support their efforts to become a political, economic, social, and cultural force in their society.

45. **Mr.** Chng Tze **Chia** (Singapore), welcoming the informal interactive panel discussion on the role of women in peacebuilding, said that his delegation was particularly proud of the contribution being made by the Singaporean national Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, to women's issues on a global scale. His Government counted among the recent key achievements in women's policies a bill passed in 2004 by Parliament allowing an overseas-born child to become a citizen of Singapore through his or her mother provided that she was Singaporean by birth, registration or descent. Further strides had been made when the Prime Minister had appointed three women to political office in August 2004. Women held such key portfolios as finance and transport, community development and youth and sports.

46. Men and women had the right to equal remuneration and equal treatment in respect of work of equal value. Following the ratification of the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (Convention No. 100), his Government and national trade unions affirmed their commitment to incorporate the principles of the Convention into future collective agreements. His Government had also equalized medical benefits for both men and women civil servants with a few to greater sharing of responsibilities between married couples.

47. Singapore had announced in 2004 a new package of measures to boost the fertility rate and support parenthood which took a holistic approach to helping both mothers and fathers to raise children, including longer maternity leave and childcare leave for both mother and father respectively. The measures would enable parents to strike a better balance between work and family life and ease overall financial burdens on the family.

48. In an attempt to maximize its human talent, his Government had repealed a quota on enrolment of women medical students so that men and women currently had an equal opportunity to study medicine at the National University of Singapore based on individual merit. His Government would continue to implement new policies that would bring better benefits to men and women alike and work to advance Singaporean women through regular dialogue with businesses and civil society.

49. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that her Government had made the necessary amendments to its national legislation to bring it into conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Monaco had long been involved in the promotion of women's rights. Monegasque women enjoyed social protection which sought to reconcile their profession and family obligations through maternity leave, family allowances and other benefits. Special attention had been paid to the needs of young women with disabilities at home and in the workplace. Her Government was also making efforts to ensure that older women, particularly those living alone, might continue to live at home if they wished to do so. They enjoyed such services as home-delivered meals and emergency hotlines.

50. The foregoing measures contributed to the advancement of women, who were engaged at the highest levels of government and civil society in Monaco. With respect to implementation of resolution 49/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women, Monegasque women constituted the majority of workers in the financial, trade, communications and other sectors.

51. Although Monaco had a very limited agricultural sector, her Government was making efforts to promote the advancement of women in rural areas through its official development assistance to Africa, including support for cooperatives and for education and protection programmes for out-of-school children. With a view to developing education for all and promoting gender equality and the advancement of women in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, her Government had extended microcredits to some villages, built schools and established a workshop to employ young women with disabilities.

52. The Heads of State who had attended the 2005 World Summit had clearly shown the correlation between development and the role of women on one hand and between development and peace on the other.

53. Her delegation supported the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), and looked forward to his report on the elimination of exploitation and sexual abuse in peacekeeping operations. Particular attention should be drawn to the new forms of violence to which women were subjected. Monaco also wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women". Her delegation commended General Assembly resolution 59/300 on a comprehensive review of a strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and eagerly awaited the Secretary-General's progress report on that issue.

54. Her delegation was also encouraged by the efforts of the Organization to promote gender equality within the framework of human resources management and noted with satisfaction the handling of that issue during the 2005 General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS with respect to progress made in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

55. Lastly, as a party to the Convention, Monaco noted the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/60/38) and the proposals to enhance its working methods.

56. **Ms. Oubida** (Burkina Faso) said that, as social and economic development was not possible without the full participation of women in society, her Government had established a fully-fledged ministry for the advancement of women to address, inter alia, several critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, including poverty, education, training, health, violence against women and girls. Policies and legislative measures to address those priorities had been elaborated with a view to ending discrimination and promoting the advancement of women. Her Government had also ratified international and regional conventions on women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and had submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports under the Convention in 2004.

57. Burkina Faso was preparing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention, as well as the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights. It had also adopted legislation to legalize wife inheritance and to prohibit violence against women, non-symbolic dowries, forced marriage and genital mutilation, and had made progress in its campaign against such practices. Burkina Faso's poverty reduction strategy also placed particular emphasis on gender equality.

58. Women were still poorly represented in public office but made up a large share of the informal sector. The National Employment Agency had been restructured, however, to allow for new training institutions aimed at making women more competitive on the job market, in particular in the area of clothing and beauty care.

59. Education and training of women and girls not attending school was another priority for her Government. Informal basic-education centres had increased their enrolment and the literacy rate had grown dramatically, including the rate for women. Concerning formal education, her Government had developed innovative ways to increase the enrolment of girls, including a positive discrimination policy which granted scholarships to all girls who passed their secondary-school entrance examinations. The enrolment rate for girls had steadily increased since 2003 and the gap between the rates for girls and boys had been closed entirely in some regions.

60. Access to basic health care, particularly for women, was another major priority. Efforts had been made to provide clinics with qualified medical personnel, access to modern contraceptive methods and other means of promoting reproductive health and family planning. Despite those efforts, health threats persisted, such as the increasing vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality, which was among the highest in the world owing to poor nutrition, numerous pregnancies and insufficient prenatal care.

61. The review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session clearly showed that gender equality and recognition of the rights of women were indispensable for the achievement of real development and peace.

62. *Mr. Butagira (Uganda) resumed the Chair.*

63. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that many of the remaining challenges to promotion of women's empowerment programmes stemmed from globalization, which affected employment and poverty-

eradication goals in developing countries in many ways. Globalization had brought significant opportunities as well as difficulties. Access to new forms of technology and trade opportunities had contributed to the social and economic advancement of women. Many women continued to suffer, however, from poverty, poor working conditions and job insecurity. Women who left their countries in search of work and a better life were often at risk of extreme abuse by traffickers.

64. The goals outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action required a balanced and comprehensive approach. The elimination of poverty could create an environment in which to combat violence against women. The elimination of violence and discrimination against women, in turn, could help to empower women in all spheres, including their economic rights and right to development.

65. His Government's concern for improving the status of Iranian women and expanding their roles in the economic and social development of the country was guided by the principles outlined in the Iranian Constitution and set forth in the Platform for Action and follow-up processes. Women's poverty eradication was among the highest priorities of his Government and was one of the main objectives of the national development plan. Indicators on women's literacy, education, vocational training and employment showed that his Government had made progress in achieving its 20-year vision. The Islamic Republic of Iran would continue the process of empowering women, which was an integral part of its national development strategy.

66. **Ms. Al-Mahmood** (Qatar) said that the initiatives of Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad, President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and wife of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, had done much to narrow the gender gap in education. In particular, the establishment of an "Education City" outside Doha had opened new educational vistas for women. Qatar was trying to expand the role of women in all sectors of the economy by tying the educational track to the professional track. There was an increasing number of women in power and decision-making positions, such as the Minister of Education, the Vice-President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the President of the National Health Authority. The political leadership had also been devoting attention to greater women's participation in the democratic process in the wake of the first elections conducted under the new Constitution.

67. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad had also founded the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women, as well as the Family Counselling Centre, which provided programmes for economically disadvantaged women.

68. Although the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action had been an important step, poverty, disease and violence continued to prevent women from participating fully in development. While the Division for the Advancement of Women, of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, had achieved many gains, more international cooperation was needed to implement the Beijing Platform, especially with regard to mobilization of resources, finance mechanisms and technical cooperation for developing countries.

69. **Mr. Pekarchuk** (Ukraine), aligning his delegation with the statement made by the European Union, said that the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session showed that many countries had made significant efforts towards the advancement of women in the past decade. Ukraine reaffirmed its commitment to the obligations set forth in those documents.

70. Women continued to face many obstacles, however, including violence, trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Economic and Social Council and Security Council to combat various forms of exploitation and violence as well as the inclusion in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit of the provisions suggested by Ukraine concerning human trafficking. The international community must, however, redouble its efforts to protect women and children in armed conflict.

71. The Convention and its Optional Protocol continued to play a principal role in the advancement and promotion of the rights of women, and his delegation was making every effort to fulfil its reporting obligations. The promotion of gender equality was a priority of his Government. It was also a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

72. His Government had taken a proactive approach to the promotion of gender equality and had given particular attention to raising awareness about human trafficking. It was gradually incorporating the objectives of the Platform for Action into its national plan to improve the status of women. Furthermore, legislation had been adopted guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

73. Lastly, he said that Ukraine would be hosting the thirty-first session of the general assembly of the International Council of Women in Kyiv in 2006. The international event would give fresh impetus to the achievement of gender equality.

74. **Ms. Núñez de Odremán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that Venezuela, as a party to the Convention, had submitted all the required periodic reports. Venezuela reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session.

75. Women played a fundamental role in the country's economic and social development. A gender perspective had been included in the Constitution and in labour and land laws, and a national plan for women's equality of opportunity had been adopted. Various institutions had been established to deal with women's rights, including a national institute for women which participated in elaborating public policies on health, education, employment and legal services. A development bank for women had been created to facilitate access to microcredit and to provide technical assistance in setting up a business. In education, an equal number of boys and girls were enrolled in schools, and access to free education at all levels was available to both men and women.

76. A law on violence against women and the family and a related plan of action helped to coordinate action to prevent and punish such violence. The plan included a national emergency hotline and shelters for women in imminent danger.

77. The number of women in senior government positions had increased significantly and attempts were being made to include a gender perspective in national statistics. Other achievements included the adoption of a law protecting women's reproductive rights and the development of a national programme on sexual and reproductive health which established policies on prevention and care and offered free treatment to persons suffering from AIDS, especially women and children.

78. Her delegation wished to draw attention to the work accomplished by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), which had made invaluable contributions to the advancement of women in developing countries.

79. The Government condemned the trafficking of women and children and had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols. Venezuela rejected the use of unilateral coercive measures as instruments of political or economic pressure, as such measures violated the Charter and hindered the economic and social development of women and children in particular.

80. **Mr. Husain** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that the national policies and development efforts of his organization's member States were aimed at attaining equality before the law and in all aspects of social and economic life. Any anomalies found in national legislations were due to the deterioration of social values and were currently being identified and addressed.

81. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), OIC was pleased to note those paragraphs that addressed women's needs in terms of national legislation and standards. However, much remained to be done in terms of implementation. His delegation wished to point out that Islam did not tolerate violence of any kind and that the proposed measures to criminalize violence against women were fully consistent with Islamic teachings. OIC remained interested in the study being undertaken by the Secretariat on the different forms of violence against women, particularly those mentioned in paragraph 23 of the report, and reiterated its willingness to cooperate on the study and participate in the experts' meetings.

82. With regard to the negative impact of globalization, it was evident that the increasing mobility of women exposed them to the dangers of exploitation, abuse and other injustices. The problem of female mobility needed to be taken into account in national, regional and global economic planning, so that the interests of women and their families were safeguarded.

83. At its latest session, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had reaffirmed its intention to convene a ministerial conference on women to develop an action plan enhancing the role of women in the development of Muslim societies and to create greater opportunities for women in all walks of life.

84. His organization remained committed to cooperating with the United Nations in its efforts to move closer to a family-oriented, harmonious and progressive global village, as envisioned in the Millennium Development Goals.

85. **Mr. Motter** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the issue of gender equality had long been one of his organization's priorities. It had contributed to all the world conferences on women, placing emphasis on parliamentary action and follow-up, and had adopted a resolution on gender equality on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Conference.

86. To ensure respect for women's rights, it was necessary to increase the number of female parliamentarians and enhance the capacity of parliaments to address gender issues. During the parliamentary forum organized by IPU and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women at the United Nations in March 2005, parliamentarians had concluded that, in addition to raising quotas, it was necessary to change mentalities, enhance women's capacities and provide financial support to female candidates. It was also clear that increasing women's participation in politics would require a much larger framework of rights and more results in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS and all forms of violence.

87. With regard to the capacity of parliaments to address gender issues, the parliamentarians had recommended the establishment of parliamentary committees on gender equality and the development of an environment that supported female parliamentarians, with gender-sensitive rules and codes of conduct and family-friendly working hours.

88. Aware of the challenges faced by women running for election, IPU had organized a training seminar, in cooperation with the Supreme Council for Women of Bahrain and with the support of the British Embassy, for female candidates in the upcoming 2006 elections in Bahrain. The seminar had aimed to provide female candidates with an overall picture of their role as future representatives, focusing on ways to carry out an electoral campaign and on the unique challenges faced by female candidates in a political environment traditionally dominated by men. Furthermore, together with the legislative assembly of El Salvador and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), IPU had also organized a regional seminar where Latin American parliamentarians had debated ways to strengthen their role in the budgetary process and develop gender-sensitive budgets.

89. IPU was expecting 170 female parliamentarians to attend its upcoming assembly, which represented one third of the total number of participants. The organization's work and priorities had changed with the growing presence of women and it was hoped that IPU would be able to achieve the same change in parliaments worldwide.

90. **Ms. Kekeh** (World Bank) said that achieving gender equality was integral to achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a whole. Although significant progress had been made since the Beijing Conference, women continued to face multiple barriers in attaining equal access to rights and resources. The target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary schools by 2005 had not been reached and unemployment rates remained higher among women than among men. Poverty and lack of growth only exacerbated gender disparities; unequal access to education and health care was more acute among the poor.

91. One of the future challenges facing the World Bank was to assist countries in increasing women's access to economic opportunities. To that end, it had developed a gender initiative which identified and disseminated important gender-related issues to be taken into account by policymakers when weighing the costs and benefits of economic reforms. In countries such as Viet Nam and Tajikistan, the World Bank was already helping women enhance their participation in the private sector by providing them with credit, improving their access to information, building capacities and providing job-skills training.

92. With respect to women and conflict, it was noted that gender inequality exacerbated the non-monetary aspects of poverty such as lack of opportunity, empowerment and security, particularly during post-conflict periods. Women were often excluded from contributing to the formal peace process because they were not members of political institutions; yet, their

participation was essential to ensure the incorporation of gender issues into peace agreements. The World Bank recognized that women made important contributions to peace through women's civil-society organizations, and had recently supported a project on community empowerment and local governance in Timor-Leste that incorporated an equal male-female ratio for elected village representatives. In collaboration with over 40 partners, the World Bank was also implementing a demobilization and reintegration programme in the greater Great Lakes region of Africa which recognized the special needs of female and child ex-combatants.

93. With just 10 years left to reach the Millennium Development Goals, additional efforts were needed to mainstream gender in all areas of work, particularly economic growth, labour-market reforms and post-conflict reconstruction. The World Bank remained committed to continuing its partnership with United Nations agencies, other donor partners and Governments to achieve the agenda set forth in the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.